

## GyMEA Peoples Church Communications Policy

Revised May 2023

Technological developments in the field of communications are making private contact between individuals ever easier. As part of our commitment to the welfare of the children in our care, and in connection with the principles of our Child Protection Policy, all communications<sup>1</sup> between adults<sup>2</sup> and minors<sup>3</sup> will be in accordance with the following principles:

- Any mobile phone number or e-mail address belonging to a minor will not be recorded in ministry records or personally by leaders without the written permission of the parent/guardian. Where available the parent's mobile phone number and e-mail address will be collected at the same time.
- During normal phone calls to a minor attempt should be made to also speak with the parent so that they are aware of the call.
- Private communication with a minor via electronic means will comply with the following guidelines:
  - o All communications with minors via e-mail or SMS text messaging will be automatically sent with a c.c. to a parent unless such ongoing contact has the written approval of the parent or guardian.
  - o First point of contact by phone should be the parent's mobile phone. If this is not possible, then parental permission should be sought to make contact by the child's mobile phone or an alternate communication method used.
  - o Prior parental approval should be sought before engaging with a minor in any internet communication. Internet communication means communication between an adult and a minor via any social media platform – i.e. Facebook, Facebook Messenger, What's App, Instagram, Discord etc. This communication should be limited to church activity and not of a personal nature.
- Personal visits to the home of a minor should if possible be signaled in advance, and be done in pairs. Contact with the minor in their home should as much as possible be done in the presence of the parent. If adults are not at home at the time of the visit contact should be restricted to talking at the door.
- Private conversation with a minor should be done in the presence of at least two adults, or in relatively open or public view.
- Any contact with a minor outside the normal ministry responsibilities of a leader will only be with the knowledge and consent of the parent. Departmental leaders will be informed prior to such contact. Ongoing contact in such circumstances need to be authorized by the parents.

### Footnotes

1. The goal of this policy is the protection of children so while the intent is to protect children in our care in all situations, in practise it will relate mostly to communication about ministry activities. Normal family interaction is necessarily excluded.
2. "Adult" means any adult member or adherent of GyMEA Peoples Church and also includes minors in their formal duties as carers of children.
3. A "minor" is anyone aged less than 16 years.